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SUB: Specific Reasons to REJECT CHSSP's Social Structure/Caste System Related Suggestions
i.e. comment#2536 and comment 2511

Hello
Responsible Member of Instructional Quality Commission
Sacramento, CA.

Akaksha Maddi is my daughter. She faced and witnessed unfair experience in school because of negative portrayal that originates in the History Social Sciences Framework. She is one of the hundreds of American Hindu students. For records, she in person testified in front of IQC her grievance.

To remind you all, I am including her testimony - a specific experience in the **Appendix** below..

In fact, you initially acted upon this in a positive way. You added an instruction for teachers "Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief."

However I witness a CHSSP's sudden barrage of changes only worsens an already existing serious the problem for Hindu and non Hindu 6th graders on social structure.

I am specifically referring to the following:

1. *Comment #2536 Page 215, lines 891-892:*

*Current text: "Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure **rather than** a religious belief."*

*CHSSP's Suggested change: "Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure **as well as a religious belief.**"*

2. *Comment #2511 Page 214, lines 872-874:*

Current text, "A person belonged to a particular varna by his professional excellence and his good conduct, not by birth itself."

*CHSSP's Suggested change: "A person belonged to a particular varna **not just by his professional excellence and his good conduct, but mainly by birth.**"*

My ask is to **REJECT** these suggestions. Consider the following:

1. The above suggested changes completely **twist the intention** why IQC/Board introduced them. It emphasizes an instruction teachers and publishers in a denigrating way. Many Hindu sixth graders are already **vulnerable to a psychological** damage with their classroom experiences and around this topic.

2. Numerous individuals and organizations have already clarified that Indian Social Structure and so called Caste System (a term with non Hindu origin) is **an extremely complex area for a sixth grade framework**.

3. The amount of space in your recent framework draft on social structure is **already disproportionately high** compared Framework version before 2010. i.e. more than 300 words on caste system and social structure in draft in progress, as against around 100 words in framework before 2010. This is also **disproportionately higher** considering already low space to describe Hinduism itself.

4, This **sudden inflow** of CHSSP recommendations have come **days before** the IQC hearing concludes. Why is it so? It seems a deliberate attempt to **not allow the Hindus** to raise their voice for fairness. This is against the values of America that I understand.

5. Last, a question: how **many positive suggestions** on Hinduism has IQC received from South Asian group? Does being scholar with PHD give you a right to play with a future of an American generations? Has **IQC** and board considered this?

Sincerely
Bhaskar Maddi
Pleasanton, CA, 94588

Appendix

My daughter Akanksha in shared her 6th grade grievance in front Commission during May 2015 hearing. Below.

“Hello everyone. My name is Akanksha Maddi, and I’m in 8th grade at Thomas Hart Middle School. Sixth grade was the first time I was to learn about my culture in school, so at first I was excited. However, I was surprised to see that the lesson was so short and had nothing I knew to be my religion or heritage.

Because the caste system was mentioned so many times, our teacher created a simulation in our class, in which we were put into four major caste groups. Each student was given a worksheet to complete by the end of the period. However, a higher caste could take advantage of a lower caste by asking them for the answers, and the lower caste was forced to give it to them. By the end of the period, a majority of the class was complaining of how unfair this is, and how cruel this Hindu system was..

In fact, I had never even known what my caste was, until the textbook brought it up, as my parents and relatives didn’t render it important for my cultural learning. I have many Hindu friends and I do not know any of their caste. However, my classmates and teacher think we, Hindus, still believe in primitive and unjust practices.

Standards for evaluating History Social Science *clearly states its purpose as to* “enable all students to become aware and accepting of religious diversity while being allowed to remain secure in any religious beliefs they may already have”.

But the experience that I had clearly shows that my class was not helped to become aware and accepting of my heritage nor was I allowed to remain secure in my belief. I do not want my friends to look down upon me and my culture and religion because of my textbook.. This is unfair.

We know that social hierarchies have existed in all societies, so why is Hinduism singled out with such negative portrayal?

What I request is fairness and dignity. Is that too much to ask for? I’m asking for the textbooks to focus on the positive aspects of Hinduism, and not focus on only negative.

Thank you.”